Dr. Gladys Mae West

Born Oct. 1930
Sutherland, VA
Inducted: 2022

Dr West is a mathematician whose 42-year career at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, spanned the analog to digital eras of scientific research, from 1956 to retirement in 1998.

Her efforts there ranged over a wide variety of problems including the Seasat radar altimetry project for remote ocean sensing; modeling of Earth's ellipsoidal shape. According to the Wikipedia entry on Dr. West, the model she developed ultimately led to (development of) the Global Positioning System (GPS). In 2018 she was inducted into the US Air Force Hall of Fame, by the Space Command, which called her one of the "so-called 'Hidden Figures' part of the team who did computing for the US military in the era before electronic systems."
At her retirement, her commanding officer said, "she likely had no idea that her work would impact the world for decades to come." Always modest, Dr. West remarked: "When you're working every day, you're not thinking 'What impact is this going to have on the world?' You're thinking, 'I've got to get this right.' "